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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016

Hurricane Matthew

Weather forces travellers to cancel plans.
Page 2.

No laughing matter

Clowns spotted around Niagara.
Page 9.

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Fox tales



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Bill Vigars speaks to Lakeshore Catholic High School students last Tuesday about Terry Fox's journey across Canada and how difficult it was for his friend to run with a prosthetic leg day after day on his Marathon of Hope across Canada.

See more on page A3.

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LOCALNEWS

Matthew hijacks southern travel plans

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Hurricane Matthew might have heen thousands of kilometres away, but the ripples reached Niagara.

Many Niagara residents had to reschedule their holiday plans due to the cancellation of flights, or out of fear their hotel might get hit by the storm.

Hurricane Matthew pounded Haiti last Tuesday, packing powerful winds and heavy rain and was expected to hit Cuha later in the day.

Lynn Fisher, senior agent at Lakeview Travel at the Fairview Mall in St. Catharines, had to rush to the rescue for a couple last weekend who were hooked for Jamaica on Sunday Oct. 2. Fisher said the couple were getting married last Saturday and were leaving the next morning, so they had to make changes fast.

The groom, Chris Watson, and his father Roh Watson were at the travel agency early that morning to make the change.

As father of the groom Rob said he wasn't ahout to let his son and daughter-in-law head into a hurricane. He said his wedding day was stressful for everyone trying to change honeymoon plans.

"It was pretty well panic mode hefore the wedding and the days leading up to it," Roh said with a laugh.

Fisher said the couple were going to Jamaica and were concerned about the risks. Fisher said the flights weren't cancelled at that time. She said she fought with the tour operator to have their vacation changed.

Roh said it was lucky his son and daughter-in-law, Emily, hooked the trip through the travel agency and not a wehsite. He joked there wouldn't he anyone to talk to if they had made the hooking online.

"It's incredihle what that woman did for Chris," Roh said ahout Fisher.

Chris said when he saw the hurricane was raised to a class five storm he was concerned ahout their safety. Chris rehooked the trip for Curaçao and the couple were set to leave for their honeymoon last Thursday.

Fisher said many of the company's clients are worried ahout their upcoming trips to Cuha and Florida. She said when people are going to a resort they are stuck, so her clients who have taken cruises are a hit hetter off. She laughed saying a hoat can change its route a hit, so she's not worried ahout that.

"Well nobody wants to be in a hurricane and nohody wants to have any of the devastation from the hurricane," Fisher said.

Owners of A Little R&R on Fitch Street in Welland are also feeling the affect of the storm. Co-owner Shirley Porga said she had to reschedule a trip for clients who were leaving last Tuesday for Holguin, Cuha. Porga said all flights to Holguin were cancelled until last Thursday, so her clients changed their destination to Cayo Coco, Cuha, which is not expected to feel the impact of the storm.

Porga said most of the travel companies have a hurricane policy so if a flight is cancelled people can reschedule their trip.

"If the flight doesn't go into that destination then they are definitely going to have to shell. Same thing if there is major destination in an area, they aren't going to send a plane into that area," Porga said.

Niagara Falls localresident Lisa Burkholder and her fiancé Mike Ashford of St. Catharines were supposed to fly to Cuha on last Tuesday, hut had to cancel. Burkholder said they checked the weather for Cuha and saw there were hurricanes in the weather forecast, so they were concerned.

"We were concerned we would still end up with all this residual, even if it didn't hit Cuha. Lucky for me I was smart and hought cancellation," she said.

The couple planned to stay at a specific resort in Santa Maria which made the choice to reschedule their trip to Novemher easier. Burkholder said she was lucky to he ahle to hook the trip later and not lose any money.

"There are flights that are going in there hecause it looks like it's going to skirt Cuha."

Burkholder said she recommends people check Canada's travel advice and advisory's wehsite hefore visiting a country.

She said it posts information ahout safety, whether it's weather or crime.

The site is https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories.



PHOTOS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women cover their heads with pans as they walk in a light rain brought by Hurricane Matthew in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



Wind blows coconut trees during the passage of Hurricane Matthew in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



Niagara College fine-tunes farming

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

Niagara College offered a possihle glimpse of farming's future last Wednesday.

Using drones and remote-controlled rovers, experts with the school's research and innovation program demonstrated how basic technology can help mitigate the effects of oncoming weather threats.

Comhined cost of the two rovers and two drones? Ahout $3,000.

Potential prohlems they can predict? Priceless.

"We can comhine the two to figure out exactly what's going on at any particular time," said Mike Duncan, an industrial research chair in agriculture and environmental technologies with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

When utilized with micrometeorological/ weather measurement stations, farmers can measure values specific to each individual farm. A soy hean field, for example, can he traversed hy a remote-controlled rover which samples heat and humidity of the crop, as soyheans are at high risk to moulds.

The drones, meanwhile, are affixed with technology that can measure infrared wave lengths.

Just the fact they're seeing what a farmer can't on the ground is also invaluahle, says Duncan.

"A farmer can, every day, get a sense of what the field looks like," he says. "When you get an aerial view, you'll see gigantic open patches."

The college's research and environment innovation centre recently received a $135,710 grant from NSERC which will he used to huild and install six weather measurement stations in fields, orchards and vineyards in southern Ontario.

The demonstration took place at Niagara College's Niagara-on-the-Lake campus in the vineyard behind the Wine Visitor and Education Centre.

The agriculture and innovation centre works with private and puhlic-sector partners to tackle challenges facing agriculture, computer programming, sustainahle food production, plant growth, horticultural practices and aquaponics.

jlaw@postmedia.com



JOHN LAW/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Mike Duncan, left, of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada and drone operator Neal Pilger of Profile Geomatics demonstrate how technology can help farms of the future, at Niagara College's Niagara-on-the-Lake campus Wednesday.

Terry Fox tales retold, students inspired

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Terry Fox's legacy lives on through many fundraisers and campaigns around the world.

Bill Vigars, who was Fox's friend and in 1980, was the Director of Puhlic Relations and Fundraising for the Canadian Cancer Society's Ontario Division, works to keep Fox's memory alive hy speaking to people ahout the run that started it all.

"I used to wonder if his legacy was going to last ... and ahout 84' or 85' I was at a run and I saw a whole hunch of kindergarten kids carrying a sign saying 'running for Terry.' And it was at that moment I realized it was going to continue," Vigar said.

Terry's Marathon of Hope started and ended in 1980. His goal had heen to raise awareness ahout cancer — and $1 million — with a cross-country run. It was cut short when the cancer that took his leg at age 18 returned. Terry died June 28, 1981 - one month short of his 23rd hirthday.

Last Tuesday, Vigars took the opportunity to speak to Lakeshore Catholic High School Students ahout the journey Fox took and the importance of the run itself. For Vigar, the way to carry on Fox's memory and fundraise for cancer research is by getting schools involved.

At age 33 Vigars went on the road with Fox and knows some of the struggles he faced running with a prosthetic leg. Vigars hrought a replica of Fox's prosthetic leg with him to demonstrate how difficult it was for Fox and just how heavy the leg was.

"Terry can he used in the education system in so many different ways. But as an example of perseverance, of staying true to your word, of not quitting. Because there were many times where I don't know how he did it physically to this day. There were so many times on the run where he was sick or tired and he would get up every morning ... and just do it," Vigars said.

Sharing Fox's story with students is a way for Vigars to let youth know they don't have to run across country to create change. He said they can use Fox as an example of perseverance so they don't give up in their own lives.

"At one point I said how do you run a marathon every day? He said 'I don't, I run a telephone pole at a time ... I run to that pole and then to the next pole ... Because if I have to think I'm running a marathon everyday psychologically it's too much,'" Vigars said.

During the cross country run Vigars said he felt as though Fox knew he prohably wasn't going to get better. Vigars recalled a moment during the journey when Fox's parent's hecame emotional talking to Fox ahout having cancer. Vigars said Fox's parents said it wasn't fair their son had to go through something like this, hut Fox remained calm and unselfish.

"Terry said, 'No dad, it's not unfair, everyone gets cancer, I'm no different than anyone else!" And there was a long pause and he said, "now maybe people will understand why I was doing it."

"It was never ahout him, right from the very heginning."

Andrew Boon, vice principal of Lakeshore Catholic, said the school has heen organizing their own Terry Fox Run for students for more than 12 years. Over the years the students have raised close to $40,000.

The walk will take place next week during and after school hours, so Boon and school staff thought it would he a good idea to have Vigars speak to the students hefore the walk. He said it's an important story to tell because the majority of people have heen affected hy cancer in some way.

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First Nations finally get their due



GRANT LAFLECHE



JOHN LAW / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

A large crowd attends the opening of the Landscape of Nations memorial in Queenston Heights Park. It commemorates the role of First Nations during the War of 1812.

There has always been something about Queenston Heights Park that bugged me.

It's a beautiful park, don't get me wrong. I like it. But the manner in which it treats the heroes of the War of 1812 has always struck me as rather off-putting.

Consider Brock's Monument, the park's defining feature. It's a monolithic tower adorned with a statue of Sir Isaac Brock. Not far from the park, on a patch of grass near the Mackenzie House Printery and in the shadow of an impressive tribute to Brock's horse, is a small rock with smaller plaque fastened to it.

The plaque is in recognition for the warriors from the Six Nations who fought as allies with the British in 1812 against the United States.

Were you to judge history by the size and scope of these monuments, the obvious conclusion is that Brock, slain during the Battle of Queenston Heights, was the hero of the war and the First Nations warriors were just sort of there. By this standard, Alfie the horse is a more pivotal historical figure than a Mohawk or Oneida warrior.

But history shouldn't be judged by the size of a monument.

Consider Brock's full history for a moment. He is an undoubtedly important historical figure. He was self-made and did have some notable victories over the Americans, particularly in Detroit.

But he was also a man touched by hubris. He resented being stationed in the backwater of the colonies and wanted to be on the front lines of that other war of 1812 against Napoleon in Europe.

He was determined to win the war and prove himself a hero so he would be sent back across the pond to his rightful station.

So it is not hard to imagine Brock — a hefty fellow with a 48-inch waist — lumbering up a hill in a bright red coat in a hail of musket fire at the Battle of Queenston Heights in a bid to win glory for himself. The fatal results were probably predictable.

However important you gauge Brock's place in history, he did not win the war.

First Nations warriors, by contrast, were fighting for their homes. The European colonists had already taken much of their lands and the Six Nations allied with the British with the belief they were better off with the Crown than the Americans.

The warriors were the stuff of nightmares to American troops. It is not an exaggeration to say British success in the war depended heavily upon First Nations combat prowess and skill at psychological warfare.

At the very least, the Six Nations troops and their leaders deserved to be recognized on equal footing with Brock. Instead, Brock got a tower and the aboriginal warriors got the equivalent of a participation ribbon.

Fortunately, that has finally changed.

Last Saturday, the new First Nations War of 1812 memorial opened to the public, featuring statues of aboriginal leaders John Norton and John Brant.

Symbolically, the memorial is more than just honouring the role the Six Nations played in the formation of our country and their sacrifices in war.

See DUE on A5

I've been thinking about God and life

PASTOR GARY TOMIUCK
Wainfleet Congregational Christian Church.

The tragedy of the sinking of the Titanic is a parallel for life.

Five warnings were given and all five were ignored. The last one because no one wanted to awaken the Captain. Many people are sleeping and ignoring the warnings until the iceberg of God's judgement hits them hard and unexpectedly. They are sinking and drowning and all that matters is were they lost or saved?

The question is are you saved and do you know it?

John Wesley an early Methodist preacher thought that he was a Christian at one point in his life. He was involved in church, bible studies, prison ministries and in hospital visitation.

But he said "I was sent to convert the Indians, but who will convert me?" He was lost, but feeling his heart strangely warmed later he was saved.

Saul of Tarsus was lost even killing Christians, but after his dramatic conversion experience God's love broke through and he was then Saved. This life of God in his soul so revolutionized him, that he preached, taught, built churches and suffered to establish the faith of others he once tried to destroy. This was not a new years resolution, not people trying to reform themselves, not turning over a new leaf, trying harder or patching up their own lives. This is being born again by the mighty spirit of God with the same power that raised Christ from the dead is dwelling the new believer.

See RELIGION on A5

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Salvage your life, thanks to god today

RELIGION from A4

This same spirit who brooded over the darkness of the waters at creation said, "let there be light" and there was light. (gen.1:3).

In like manner God also shines His light into a sin darkened soul saying "let there be light" and there is light. Then a person can repent and confess their sins having there heart of stone removed and replaced with a heart of flesh.

That person receives by grace alone a new heart, a new nature, a new creation.

"Except a man be born again. He cannot see the kingdom of God."

You can no more decide to be born twice than you did to be born once.

Then what about free will? Even our wills are in bondage. It's not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man but, entirely of God.(see John 1:13).

Some people say, I chose, I decided for Christ, that's true, but only in eternity past when Christ first chose you. Others say I am a Christian because of my faith, yet even your faith is God given.

"For by Grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God." (eph. 2:8).

Someone says that I must be a robot then ... no you do one thing ... you turn away from your sin and you see the difference in your outward life, because that all important change first takes place within in you by God's Spirit. Then after having received this new birth your own joy wells up and you share this truth with others. Just as surely as the retrieval of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son experienced that joy with others.

How do you share this experience with others? By first declaring the bad news. People are lost without Christ (bad news) then the good news they don't have to be.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that who so ever believes in Him (good news) will not perish (good news) (John 3:16).

When life seems to be going well, enjoy the moment as a storm may be on its way. The sun will not always be bright, the skies will not always be blue. You may encounter wind, rain, sandbars, or rocks on your figurative ship. Is your soul right with God? There is no guarantee that any one of us will see tomorrow. So, now is the day of salvation. If you are not saved do not sleep or ignore the warnings. God's iceberg of judgement will come when you least expect it. Do not leave this world unreconciled to God.

Jesus alone is your lifeboat, your lighthouse, your lifesaver. He is your rescue, your anchor and your hope.

He is also the captain of your salvation.

Four words: be reconciled to God.

How? Three words: repent and belive.

Finally two words are all that matter for now and eternity are lost and found.

It's all of mercy, it's all of grace, it's all of God and it's all through Christ.

Aboriginals' effort honoured

DUE from A4

It is also a recognition that Canada is as much their country as it is those of European descent.

A significant reason Brock got a massive monument and the warriors got a crummy rock is because Canada has, for a very long time, treated our First Nations brothers and sisters poorly. Beyond overtly horrible events such as Residential Schools, culturally we have belittled and downplayed the history of the people who first lived in these lands. After all, the conquered rarely get to write the history books.

Now, Brock and his First Nations allies both have their due. With luck, those who visit the new memorial will ask questions about Canada's relationship with our First Nations, the pivotal role they played in our history, and how we ought to face tomorrow together.

glafleche@postmedia.com



JOHN LAW /POSTMEDIA NETWORK

A large crowd attended the opening of the Landscape of Nations memorial in Queenston Heights Park earlier this month.



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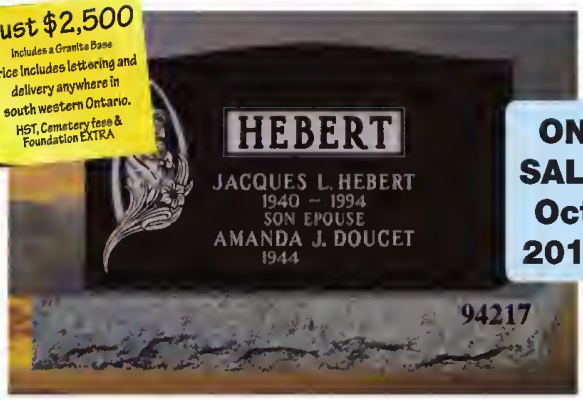
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LOCALNEWS



PHOTOS BY TONY RICCIUTO/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Wallace Friesman is a huge fan of the Dukes of Hazzard. He can often be found driving around Niagara in a police car that looks like it came from Hazzard County.

Falls man cruising in Dukes of Hazzard style

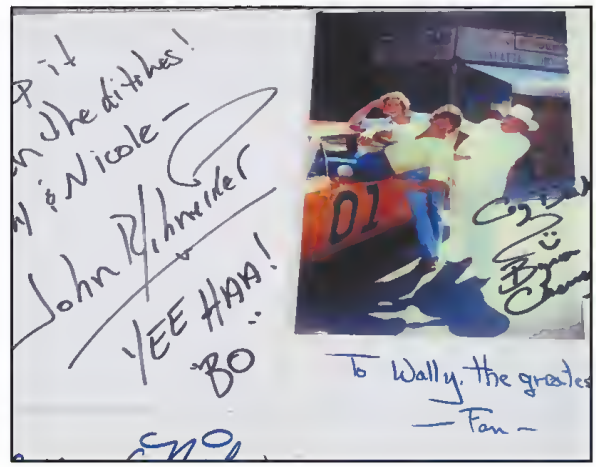
TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

If one was driving through Hazzard County, Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane might be found behind the wheel of this cop car.

In Niagara Falls, the driver of this 1981 Chevrolet Caprice, complete with red-and-white emergency lights on the hood, will be Wallace Friesman.

This car is so special to Friesman that not even his wife, Nicole, or his twin brother, George, are allowed to drive it.

"I've always loved the *Dukes of Hazzard*. I used to run home after school so that I could watch the re-runs on television," said Friesman, who has built the car to look like a 1989 Chevrolet so that it would look just like the police car that was used in the *Dukes of Hazzard* movie version.



For those who are not familiar with the television show or the movie, it depicts the adventures of cousins Bo, Luke, Daisy and their uncle Jesse as they outfox crooked Hazzard County commissioner Boss Hogg and Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane.

See DUKES on A15

LOCALNEWS

Brock on bug watch

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

While Zika-carrying mosquitoes haven't yet reached southern Ontario, studies indicate a warming climate could prove attractive to invasive insect species.

That was the message Brock University's Dr. Fiona Hunter told an audience of public health inspectors in Niagara Falls last Wednesday.

Hunter, one of Canada's top medical entomologists best known for her work on the West Nile virus, is currently involved in a joint research project between Brock and Niagara Region Public Health to monitor insect migration by using a unique tool.

The Rothamsted Trap, a 12-metre-tall tube, was installed several years ago at Decew Falls in Thorold. It is one of only two such traps in North America. The other is at Cornell University in upstate New York.

The trap acts as a bug vacuum, sucking in hundreds of insects a day.

"It collects what we call aerial plankton," Hunter said. "We have been able to find insects that are expanding their ranges northwards. We're specifically looking at potential vectors of disease who can transmit infection to livestock or humans."

The results are being analyzed by researchers at Brock and the health department will share the data with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Brock is also involved in an ongoing research project to determine if Canadian mosquitoes can transmit the Zika virus.

The virus has been around for decades, Hunter said, yet it made headlines earlier this year after it was linked to an increase in the number of cases of microcephaly, a neuro-developmental disorder that results in babies being born with small, underdeveloped skulls and brains.

Most of the cases have originated in Central and South America.

Hunter shared her ongoing research during a conference of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI).

More than 275 people attended the three-day conference held at the Fallsview Casino Resort.

"The main goal of the conference is education and networking," said Tony Makrostergios, CIPHI Ontario past president.

The conference included presentations on body modification, e-cigarettes and UberEATS, an on-demand food delivery service.

"There are always new and emerging trends," said Makrostergios, a public health inspector with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

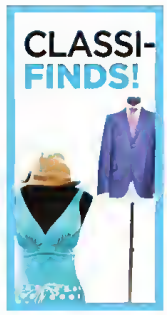
Health inspectors are responsible for conducting inspections on businesses that provide food as well as shops that offer tattoos, piercings, hair styling and treatments such as manicures.

They also monitor public beaches and swimming pools.



JULIE JOCSAK/ POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Brock University scientist Dr. Fiona Hunter.





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LOCALNEWS

Waived fees leads to more development in Port Colborne

LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

The City of Port Colborne is looking to "keep the momentum going" by continuing to waive development charges for residential buildings.

Waiving charges started two years ago and since then there has been a dramatic increase in development interest in the city, said development and planning director Dan Aquilina.

"The amount of building permits we've received since that waiver has shown that the market is turning," he said.

He said in previous years, there would typically be six or seven homes built, but that number increased to 15 homes for 2015. For 2016, the city is sitting at about 25 homes being developed.

Aquilina said waiving fees could be seen as an incentive for people to develop in Port Colborne.

"I've heard in my time here it's expensive to develop. It's not cheap because you have your building permits, those fees, but they're nominal, minimal," he said.

"But it's the development charges that hit harder on people because it's not only the municipality that collects development charges, it's the Region of Niagara that has development charges, too."

Mishka Balsom, president and chief executive officer of Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, said her chamber encouraged the city to continue waiving fees for another year because of the increase it has seen in development. She also feels the city could see a construction boom because of it.

"If you're a developer and you can build residential homes and the development charges are being spared in it, it's a huge venture for people to look at," she said.

One of the things Port Colborne has going for it, too, is land. Balsom said there is still a lot available in Port Colborne.

Aquilina said, "The activity we're seeing now is within the built boundaries of the city. The roads are there, the services are there. The lots are vacant, so you just have to tap into the existing sewer or water line."

Even with the city waiving development fees, there isn't any worry about losing money in the long run.

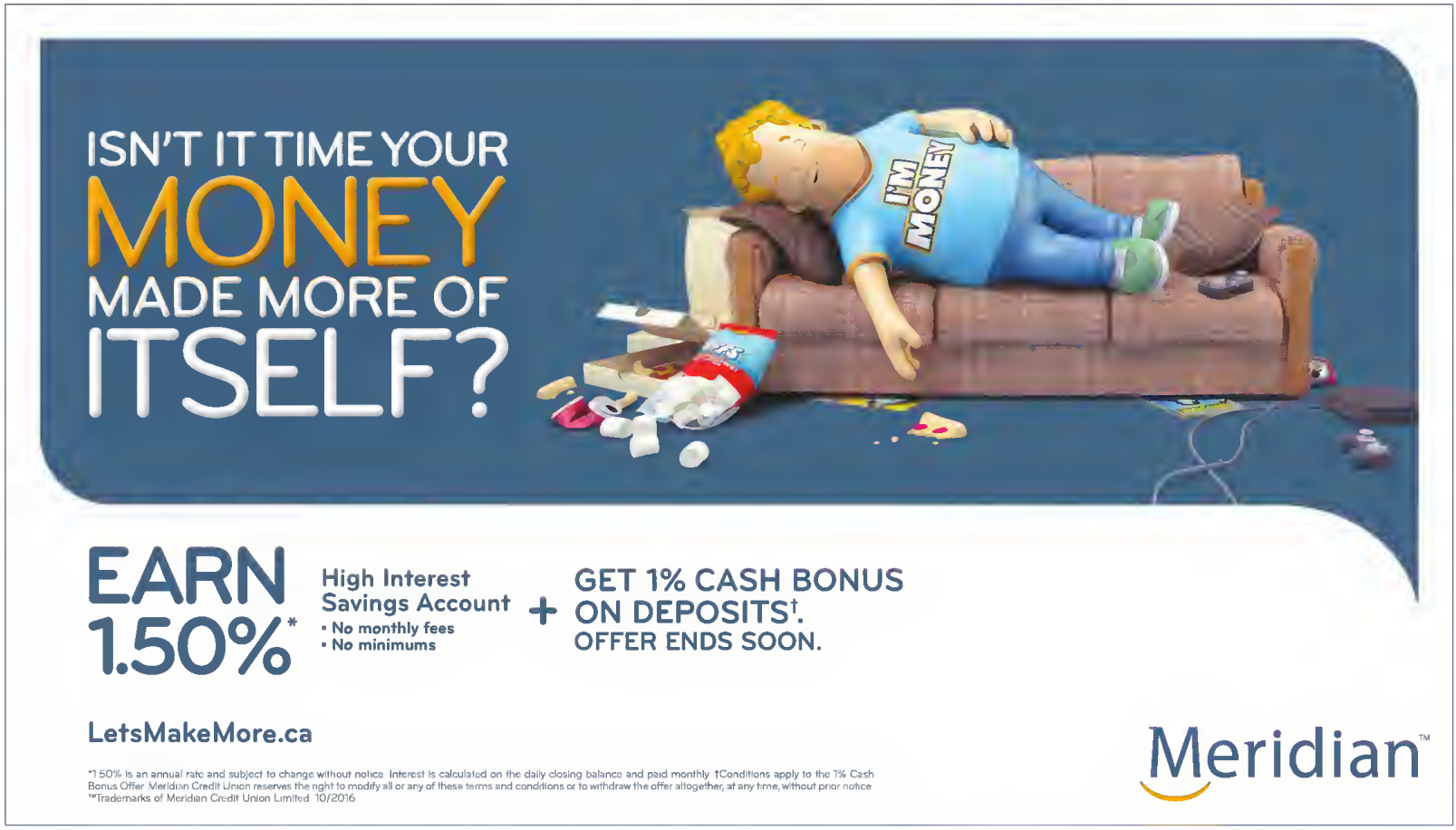
"Although the city won't collect the development charges immediately, in the long term they will develop more property taxes," said Balsom. "So it will offset the charges that they might not be able to collect now with something they will be able to collect later."

Aquilina said the city also sees it as a positive because it's helping make development more affordable for people.

lbarton@postmedia.com



Mishka Balsom



LOCALNEWS

Clowns give the creeps

MICHELLE ALLENBERG and BILL SAWCHUK
Postmedia Network

Niagara, it seems, hasn't entirely escaped the scary clown epidemic that has swept through the U.S. and parts of Canada over the past couple of months.

In a social-media-fuelled frenzy, sinister clown sightings from Cape Breton to the U.S. South, over-reactions, a school lockdown, false clown-attack claims, warnings from police not to shoot clowns and even terror-related charges have emerged in recent weeks.

Last Wednesday, Const. Virginia Moir said Niagara Regional Police hadn't had any reports of clown sightings or scary "clown-related" activity. But by last Thursday afternoon there had been reports of just less than 10 calls to police about clowns in Niagara.

Const. Phil Gavin, media relations officer for the NRP, said police had received calls about a clown standing on a bridge and people being chased.

Some people find clown costumes frightening because of an innate phobia. Gavin said this can cause people to become alarmed when they see a clown. If people feel threatened or concerned Gavin said they should call police and it will be dealt with. The calls will be handled in the same manner as a suspicious person or welfare check call.

"Officers can go and speak to the person to determine what their intentions are," Gavin said.

When the goal of the individual is to incite fear, Gavin said, this can become a problem. People have a fight or flight response and where people run into a problem is when they want to fight.

"In terms of the pranksters, at some point they should use caution, they may run into someone who is not fearful and their natural reaction is to defend themselves.

Moir said she is aware of the scary clown videos that have flooded YouTube.

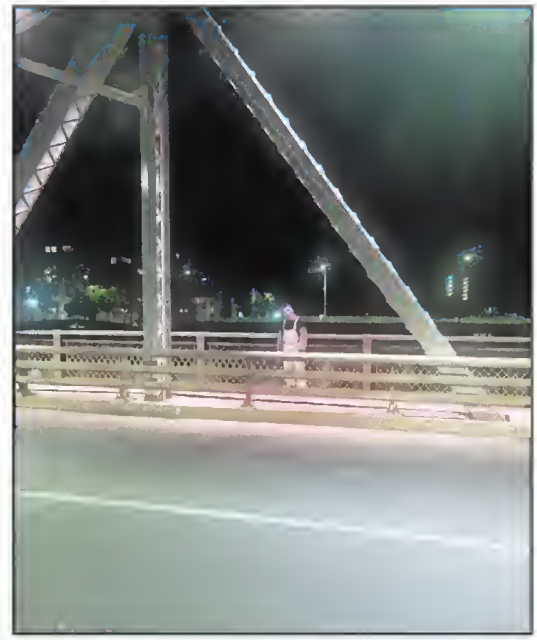
"I'm sure some will think it's fun to do, but the Niagara Regional Police Service is urging people not to follow this dangerous trend."

People who choose to dress up as scary clowns are taking a risk. Gavin said when police receive calls they will treat each situation differently, but there is a chance of being arrested and charged.

Gavin used the example of a clown chasing someone and that person being hit by a vehicle. He said if that were to happen the person dressed as a clown could face civil liability and possibly criminal negligence charges.

"Someone standing in a clown costume in the middle of the bridge, that's one thing. But when people are being chased and they are holding items of a threatening nature we are getting into another realm," Gavin said.

See CLOWNS on A22



JAMES TAKEO/SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

A clown was spotted on Welland's Main Street Bridge.

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LOCALNEWS

A woman, leukemia and her willow tree

CHERYL CLOCK
Postmedia Network

A few years ago, Rebecca Drotos snipped off three shoots from a willow tree. The tree that she had climbed as a young girl had been cut down, but its stump had sprung forth a bouquet of suckers.

In Rebecca's mind, it had simply refused to die.

She respected the tree for that reason.

She brought the three shoots to her farm in Lincoln and stuck them quite unceremoniously into the dirt, watering them until they set roots into the soil.

Then she planted each of them.

One of them has since died, a likely victim of hungry rabbits. Another, at the end of her driveway, is small. Unremarkable.

But the third shoot, the one she planted in a field next to her barn, towers above everything, its graceful boughs cascading towards the earth in a celebration of life.

"It found a really good spot and just grew," she says.

In many ways, Rebecca is that willow.

Rebecca, too, has a certain unrelenting stubbornness towards living. In 2010, just before Christmas, a routine blood test diagnosed her with chronic lymphocytic leukemia, the most common form of adult leukemia.

The 53-year-old is one of 2,200 Canadians diagnosed each year with the incurable, slow-growing cancer of the blood and bone marrow.

In the first weeks and months, she bargained: If she lived five more years she'd see her daughter graduate high school. Seven years, that would be a bonus.

She consumed everything she could find on the disease.

"You feel terribly out of control," she says. "The c-word is terrifying. You meet people online, and then find out that they've died."

See LEUKEMIA on A20



CHERYL CLOCK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Rebecca Drotos, 53, lives with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. She is one of the patients who helped to develop the My CLL Compass, a tool designed to help people with CLL have an informed conversation with their doctor. There are treatments, but no cure.

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Niagara still hunting for physicians

11 full-time doctors arrived and set up shop from January to September; 14 have retired, closed their practice or relocated outside Niagara

BILL SAWCHUK
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region wants its staff to keep working to recruit and retain family physicians for another year.

Its public health and social services committee voted to recommend to council to continue the program that tries to address a chronic shortage of doctors in the area.

It's a prohlem that threatens to get worse as the population grows and ages.

To make matters worse, more than 40 family physicians in Niagara are over the age of 65, when retirement becomes an increasingly attractive option.

"I think it is work that is important to do," Dr. Valerie Jaeger, Niagara's medical officer of health, said. "It is up to council to decide if it is work we want to fund."

The program costs taxpayers $113,000, a report to the committee said. Every municipality in Niagara is on the provincial high-needs list for family physicians, the committee heard.

From January to September, 11 full-time family doctors set up shop in the region as well as five who took on short-term contracts. A total of 14 physicians have retired, closed their practice or relocated outside Niagara in that same time.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Jaeger said maintaining a healthy roster of family doctors in Niagara is complicated because retiring physicians often leave practices of 3,000 to 4,000 patients.

New, younger doctors — because of a number of factors including lifestyle — want practices in the 1,500 to 2,000 patient range.

The recruiter often must find two young family doctors to replace one retiring physician.

While many of Niagara's municipalities have a person on staff designated to deal with physician recruitment in addition to many other duties, only St. Catharines has its own part-time recruiter.

Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn expressed his support for the program. He said the Region is working to attract new residents, and "one hig check box is, 'Can I get a family doctor?'"

The program operates in collahoration with the municipalities to promote Niagara as a destination of choice to prospective family physicians.

It was renewed for three years in 2011 with two one-year options.

Since 2011, 54 physicians have come to Niagara and 48 have retired or moved. Over the past nine months, the program has generated 60 leads, and there are 17 clinic vacancies that have heen identified.

NIAGARA PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT

2011: 6 new physicians; 1 physician out of practice; 256 family physicians in Niagara; 57 needed
2012: 5 new physicians; 3 physicians out of practice; 258 family physicians in Niagara; 55 needed.
2013: 11 new physicians; 12 physicians out of practice; 257 family physicians in Niagara; 56 needed.
2014: 9 new physicians; 5 physicians out of practice; 261 family physicians in Niagara; 52 needed.
2015: 12 new physicians; 13 physicians out of practice; 260 family physicians in Niagara; 53 needed.
2016: 11 new physicians; 14 physicians out of practice; 257 family physicians in Niagara; 56 needed.



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PHOTOS BY TONY RICCIUTO/ POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Wallace Friesman is a huge fan of the Dukes of Hazzard. He can often be found driving around Niagara Falls in a police car that looks like it came from Hazzard County.

'This winter I plan to redo the interior'

DUKES from A6

The cousins drove a 1969 Dodge Charger, often referred to as the General Lee.

"This car was basically junk when I got it," said Friesman. "It came from Prince Edward Island. I took the body right off the frame and now everything on this car is new. It took me about two years to put it all back together and I'm still working on it. It has taken a little longer than I expected."

On the trunk of the vehicle there are autographs from a number of celebrities, including Catherine Bach, who played Daisy Duke. Friesman has met her twice and expects to see her again at an upcoming Comic Con show in Hamilton.

"I take the car to some of the cruise nights and people really like it," said Friesman. "This winter I plan to redo the interior."

Anyone looking in the back seat will find large custom-made *Dukes of Hazzard* pillows and a human skeleton handcuffed to the door frame. There is also a large megaphone loud speaker siren.

Friesman said he's not exactly sure how much money he has invested in the car, but it's thousands.

One of the questions he is often asked is whether it's legal to have the red-and-white emergency lights on the roof.

"I tell them yes, but you cannot have any power running to them while on city property or I could go to jail. It's for display only. Most of the cops know the car around Niagara Falls."

Friesman said he learned to work on cars from his grandfather, Richard, so this car is dedicated to him. His grave at Fairview Cemetery has a piece of a Superman car that his twin brother George once owned.

Nicole said her husband has had a fascination with the *Dukes of Hazzard* since he was a child.

"He wants to get a cage for the backseat so that it will look like whoever is in the backseat is in jail," she said. "He always tells me, 'don't worry honey, the car is almost done,' but it's never done. He's just trying to make me feel good."

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Lives and deaths explored at Drummond Hill Cemetery



ALISON LANGLEY/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Falls History Museum will host evening walking tours of Drummond Hill Cemetery, Oct. 14, 15, 21 and 22 at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

For more than 40 years, sexton William Dalton kept meticulous records of people interred at Drummond Hill Cemetery and other cemeteries in the area.

His journal entries, dating from 1845 to 1916, include information on people who helped to shape Niagara Falls.

Residents will be able to get a glimpse into the lives — and deaths — of some of the famous and not-so-famous people of Niagara Falls' past with the return of the popular October walking tours of the cemetery.

"A lot of the information we use to tell the stories of the people buried there are from the information in his diaries," said Suzanne Moase, curator at Niagara Falls History Museum, which hosts the annual event.

Dalton's burial records included more than just the date and name of the deceased. He would often include identifying information and anecdotal comments about the individual.

The tours, led by a costumed guide portraying Dalton, will include music and theatrical scenes.

"It's a fun and engaging way to learn our history," Moase said.

While it is a historical walk rather than a haunted walk, Moase said the tour is recommended for ages 14 and up as some of the content may not be suitable for younger audiences.

The tours — Oct. 14, 15, 21 and 22 at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. — will start at the cemetery gates on Buchner Place off Drummond Road. Each tour ends with refreshments at the nearby Battle Ground Hotel Museum.

Tickets must be purcbased in advance at the Ferry Street museum. Each tour is limited to 25 people.

Drummond Hill Cemetery, a nationally-recognized heritage site, is one of the oldest and most historic cemeteries in Canada.

It is known as the site of the bloodiest battle during the War of 1812, as well as the burial site of Laura Secord, the Canadian heroine who walked 32 kilometres in June 1813 to warn British forces of an impending American attack.

After the fierce battle between British and American forces in 1814, the area became known as Drummond Hill in honour of Gen. Gordon Drummond, who fought at the Battle of Lundy's Lane.

CEMETERY TOURS

When: Oct. 14, 15, 21 and 22
Where: Drummond Hill Cemetery

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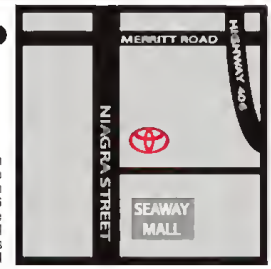
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LOCALNEWS

Suspect in pharmacy robbery enters guilty plea

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

A Port Colborne man who took part in a robbery of a Binbrook pharmacy will return to court early next year for sentencing.

Michael Piccinni, 28, pleaded guilty last Wednesday in an Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines to a charge of robbery in front of Judge Peter Wilkie.

The offence took place Nov. 13, 2015.

Assistant Crown attorney Andrew Brown, reading from an agreed statement of facts, said Piccinni was involved in a robbery with another man, Tyler Fenton, at the Shoppers Drug Mart in Binbrook.

During the robbery Fenton wore a yellow work hat which he had obtained from Piccinni. At all times Piccinni was a passenger in a vehicle driven by Fenton to and from the pharmacy, located at 3027 Binbrook Road West.

Fenton entered the pharmacy at about 9:28 p.m., dressed as a construction worker and wearing a ski mask covering the lower portion of his face.

Court heard Fenton handed the black bag to the pharmacist and demanded fentanyl patches and "all the oxys" they had. He had in his possession what appeared to be a .22 calibre long gun which he carried in his pants and what appeared to be a hand gun which was in the bag he was holding.

See GUILTY on A22

Welland council calls for harsher punishment for animal abusers

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

Outraged over the treatment of animals by a St. Catharines veterinarian, Welland city councillors have added their voices to the lobby calling for more severe punishments for animal abusers.

Following an emotional presentation by former Niagara Falls federal Green party candidate Steven Soos, councillors approved a motion by Ward 5 Coun. Rocky Letourneau to send a letter to the College of Veterinarians of Ontario and the Ontario Attorney General asking for more severe penalties for animal abuse by veterinarians or anyone else.

Soos said the Aug. 20 penalty against Dr. Mahavir Singh Rekhi for professional misconduct, which included a $10,000 fine as well as a 10-month suspension that could be reduced if Rekhi takes retraining, "is unacceptable and unsatisfying to the victims involved."

"How does a fine to the college and a suspension deliver justice to these victims?" Soos asked. "He still gets to practise, and he still won't have to face the walk of shame toward courthouse doors. It's not enough."

Soos said it takes a "very sadistic individual" to harm a defenceless Chihuahua, and went on to describe in detail some of the graphic footage captured by a group of former employees of Skyway Animal Hospital where Rekhi practised.

"This man should be banned from working as a veterinarian, he should have his licence revoked, and he should be subject to criminal charges for animal cruelty. This man should be put in jail for what he has done."

While introducing his motion, Letourneau said pets are "family members and we ought to treat them as such."

As a pet owner, Ward 4 Coun. Pat Chiocchio said he is the voice of his animals.

"They are like family. If anyone touches my animals I get very upset," he said.

Although Letourneau's motion initially asked for more severe punishments only for veterinarians, Ward 2 Coun. Leo Van Vliet successfully amended the motion to apply to anyone guilty of animal abuse.

"Why not abuse by everyone?" he asked. "Certainly, this isn't an isolated case."

The motion was approved unanimously.

In addition to the letter from the City of Welland, organizations including Niagara Action for Animals and Brock Students for Animal Liberation have organized protests in response to what they consider too lenient punishments for the veterinarian's actions.

There are online petitions calling for Rekhi's licence to be suspended. One petition, at Change.org, had 51,906 signatures, while another petition at thepetitionsite.com was signed by 19,729 people as of last Wednesday afternoon.

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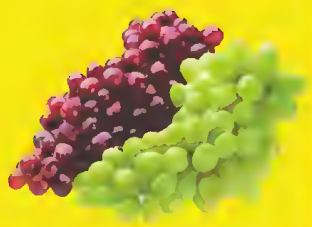
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Stubbornness leading to a more positive life

LEUKEMIA from A10

Two years later, she found herself at a CLL patient conference in Niagara Falls. She met people who had been living with the disease for many years, and heard experts share stories of medical advancements. She felt her anxiety lift.

CLL is a cancer, that's a leukemia, that is treated more like a lymphoma. It's both a cancer of the blood (leukemia) and originates in the lymphatic system (lymphoma).

Indeed, it's a disease that often confuses the newly diagnosed, because often one of the first treatments is no treatment at all, says Robin Markowitz, CEO of Lymphoma Canada.

It's called watch and wait. Watch the disease by monitoring symptoms and bloodwork, and waiting to see if it progresses.

Often people call her organization worried that their doctor isn't treating the disease seriously. However, treating too early might have no impact on the disease, and it could potentially use up what could otherwise have been a treatment option down the road, she says.

To help people navigate the nuances of CLL, the lymphoma society has developed an online resource called My CLL Compass. It includes an interactive quiz to help people identify lifestyle factors, and other health conditions and priorities that could impact treatment decisions.

The tool was developed by a team of patient associations, physicians and patients like Rebecca, who is also a board member of the CLL Patient Advocacy Group.

In 2013, Rebecca's waiting was done. Night sweats and an overwhelming, debilitating exhaustion was her body's way of telling her that the disease had worsened. By the time Rebecca began chemotherapy, she could barely lift her arms to dress herself.

After one day of chemo, her exhaustion had lifted. It's never come back. Since then, she's once again in watch-and-wait mode.

People often ask how she's able to live with a disease that will never leave, and could return at any time.

In part, it's through meditation and relaxation techniques.

And that willow tree.

She will often sit by the back door, watching swallows swoop in and out of the barn, finding peace in their graceful dance, and humour when they try to land, precariously, on the clothesline. She will listen to the sound of wind blowing through the willow. A sound much like running water. The willow is a bookend to the barn where Rebecca's two horses live. They are her reason for leaving the house at least four times a day, no matter the weather, with her two shelties at her heels. Her green ball cap suggests her place in the hierarchy: Barn Goddess.

People with CLL can easily become housebound, she says.

"Having cancer can be terrifying," she says.

She has lived that fear, but can now offer people reassurance.

"Everything is about enjoying the moment," she says.

"I feel connected to nature. I feel part of this. I feel part of the planet."

Cclock@postmedia.com



CHERYL CLOCK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Rebecca Drotos, 53, lives with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. She is one of the patients who helped to develop the My CLL Compass, a tool designed to help people with CLL have an informed conversation with their doctor. There are treatments, but no cure.

My CLL Compass

A new online tool designed to help people diagnosed with CLL have informed discussions with their doctors. The website includes an interactive quiz to help patients identify lifestyle factors and other health conditions that may impact treatment decisions.

Symptoms of chronic lymphocytic leukemia

The signs and symptoms that may indicate the presence of CLL develop slowly. At first there may be no symptoms. CLL is often detected during a routine blood test, when results show abnormal numbers of white blood cells. When other signs occur, they may be easily confused with other conditions. These symptoms include:

- Swollen but painless lymph nodes in the neck, underarm, stomach or groin
- Feeling very tired
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LOCALNEWS

Social media-fuelled frenzy results in scary sightings

CLOWNS from A9

Social-media reactions have been varied from fear to others inciting violence against clowns. Gavin said people should call police if they feel threatened and should never try to fight or attack the clowns.

"We don't suggest that people take vigilante justice against the clowns by any means," Gavin said.

James Takeo stumbled upon a clown on Main Street Bridge in Welland last Wednesday night. The clown stood silent staring at Takeo, but he said the clown didn't bother him at all and he wasn't scared of the clown in any way.

"This guy didn't appear threatening, and if there are others around acting threatening, well, you know they are acting like idiots," he said.

For many people scary clowns are not seen as a laughing matter, but Takeo said he can see the humour in it. He said the reactions from people on social media have been particularly humorous. What he doesn't find funny is when people start acting menacing by carrying fake weapons or chasing people.

"That is something that looks threatening, that is something that would scare people. If you're going to do that, then ... I would hope they would be a little more sensitive to other people," the Welland man said.

There have been published reports of clown-related incidents in at least 18 U.S. states. There have also been reports from Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Monica Schmalz of Fort Erie, better know in the clown world as Fluffy, has been a professional clown since 2003. She studied theatre at university and performed and twisted balloons at festivals and events in across southern Ontario as well as local parades and private birthday and Christmas Parties.

"When I hear about this negative behaviour and, in some cases, criminal activity involving clowns, it makes me sad," she said. "It is like someone doing the same thing in a Santa suit at Christmas time.

> **"When I hear about this negative behaviour and, in some cases, criminal activity involving clowns, it makes me sad."**
>
> Monica Schmalz of Fort Erie

"Life can be yucky sometimes, but if I take five minutes and bring some joy to somebody, it's a wonderful thing.

"The day when this feels like a job is the day I hang up my nose. Being a clown and entertainer fills my heart. I don't know who has more fun, me or the people I entertain. It makes me feel good."

Meanwhile, clown paranoia seems to be strongest south of the border

Police in Orem, Utah, went so far as to make it clear that neither they nor citizens can legally shoot random clowns.

"Here's seven words we never thought we'd be saying ... Let's have a serious talk about clowns," the Orem Police Department said on its Facebook page. "We have answered over 40 questions on FB and a few dozen calls at our dispatch centre about clowns today. It's not the number of calls or messages that is concerning but the content of the messages.

"Can I shoot or take action against someone that is dressed up like a clown"? That's not a simple yes or no question. It has a lot of variables to it."

The police in Utah said they understand that clowns to some people are already "creepy" and some people have a phobia.

"However, if someone is standing on the sidewalk, dressed like a clown and they don't have any weapons and they are just standing there not chasing anyone around and you call us, when we respond and that person decides to look at us and walk the other way without saying a word, we can't do anything."

Classes were cancelled at several Cincinnati schools a week ago after a woman told police a person dressed as a clown attacked her and threatened students and teachers.

The woman said she was smoking on her porch early last Friday morning when someone dressed as a clown grabbed her by the neck and threatened to kill her, a Cincinnati television station reported.

She said the clown told her that students and teachers at area schools "will wish they were never born."

To make matters more interesting, a big screen adaptation of Stephen King's *It* was shot in and around Toronto over the summer. *It* was a bestselling book in the U.S. In 1986 that centred on a clown called Pennywise who terrorized two generations of people in the town of Derry.

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mallenberg@postmedia.com

Piccinni acknowledges guilt, to return to court early next year

GUILTY from A18

Fenton left the store with an estimated $10,000 to $15,000 worth of narcotics, including fentanyl patches, oxyneons, hydromorphone and morphine tablets. A tracking device had also been placed in the bag by pharmacy staff.

Prior to the robbery, Piccinni moved the van at Fenton's request near the pharmacy. During the getaway, Fenton drove the van and Piccinni was a passenger.

In a statement given to police, Piccinni acknowledged removing the GPS device from the bag and threw it away a short distance from the pharmacy.

Brown said Piccinni received a few fentanyl patches for his involvement in the robbery. Piccinni was fearful of Fenton due to a prior altercation between the two of them where Piccinni was severely injured. Court was told Fenton was the principal in the robbery, while Piccinni was a party to the offence by allowing the use of his hard hat, by accompanying Fenton, by moving the van, by removing the GPS device and by accepting some of the proceeds of the robbery.

Piccinni will return to court Jan. 19, 2017. The Crown is seeking an 18-month jail term plus probation and a weapons prohibition.

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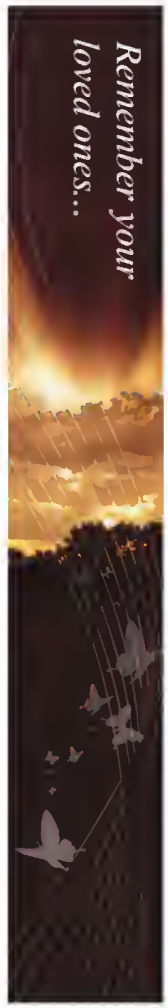
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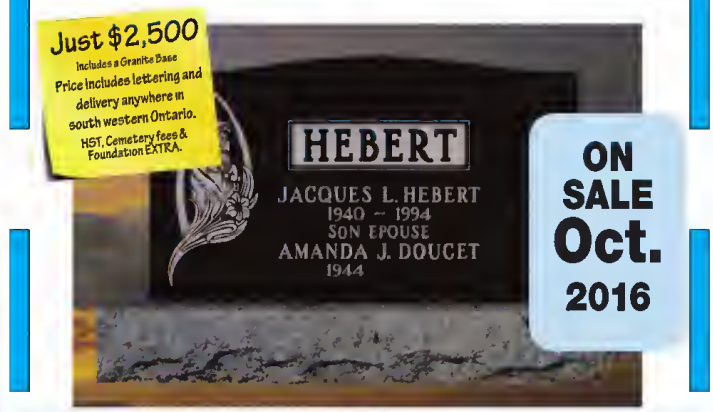
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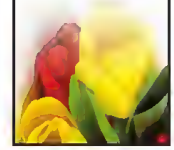
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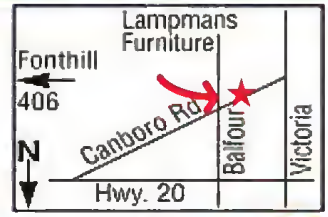
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